

Saddam Hussein

**Flexibility in Revolutionary Work:
A Way of Progress
or a Road to Revisionism?**

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After the coup d'état in Bangladesh on 15/08/1975, this event garnered widespread attention within the ranks of the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party, the broad public, and the national circles in the region of Iraq. Likewise, it was an event, that was given attention to, on a massive scale, by the Arab- and the international communities, however whose perspectives differs. At that time, India was also suffering from severe problems and crisis, and Mrs. Indira Gandhi, who was then the premier minister of India, took a series of extraordinary measures which also raised widespread attention and controversy in and outside of India.

On 21/08/1975 a seminar was held to discuss the events of Bangladesh and India. The attendees included comrades working in the party's cultural and media sectors, along with several comrades from the senior education staff. There, [I] spoke about these events, and about a range of issues derived from them.

Foremost of which was the matter of flexibility in revolutionary work, and the harmony between the nature of any regime, and its exceptional measures to confront crisis and risks.

[I] said: Until now, we still don't have detailed, insider information about what happened in Bangladesh and how it happened. However, for more than a year ago, specific expectations about the possibilities in the region of the Indian Ocean, which we mentioned in our meeting with Mr. Mujibur Rahman¹, and in our meeting with Mrs. Indira Gandhi², whether in India or in Baghdad. We also discussed them in our meetings with Soviet leaders. In this regard, we consistently linked the situation in the Indian Ocean with the situation in the Arabian Gulf. We observe that the potential storm looming over the countries of the Indian Ocean is not solely attributed to the traditional

¹ Took place in Baghdad on 06/10/1974

² Took place in India on 27/03/1974 and in Baghdad on 19/01/1975

strategic factors associated with its location. But an additional factor comes into play—the connection between the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Gulf. The latter, abundant in significant petroleum resources, holds great importance in international politics.

We always assumed that the likelihood of armed conflict in the Gulf region would remain limited, despite strained relations between some Arab Gulf countries, by the making of external powers, to have almost reached the point of escalating into a hot and dangerous conflict. This reason for its limited likelihood is that the region is oil-rich, prone to ignition, and that any hot conflict can lead to a disruption of the navigation route between the Strait of Hormuz, extending to the shores of Iraq and Iran.

Therefore, we were assured that the United States would seek to “restrain” the Arabian gulf from

interference from the Indian Ocean region, as the United States remains worrisome, if there was a possibility for the Soviet Union and its fleet to exist in the Gulf region, even if co-existence could be secured.

In such a scenario, the United States would rather both itself and the Soviet Union exit the gulf, encompassing fleets, naval bases, or facilities, while also guaranteeing the retention of its usual political and military influence in some Gulf countries.

The coup in Bangladesh explains part of the United States stance towards the separation of Bangladesh from Pakistan. As you may recall, it wasn't long ago that the United States didn't have a strong reaction towards this situation or to the Indo-Pakistani war.

Superpowers tend to align their policies with unification when there's a chance that a secession movement could run counter to their interests. Conversely, they oppose unification when it goes against their interests. On this basis, we see that some superpowers seek to unify the Gulf countries, and some Arab countries in one way or another, as we see them sometimes support their fragmentation and disintegration. This happens in other parts of the world as well. Nevertheless, every major country always ensures that the process of bloc formation or unification among states does not prevent separation or fragmentation when the likelihood exists for the entire bloc to move towards a strategy that contradicts its own interests.

On the other hand, the situation of unified Pakistan, at that time, reflected a set of contradictions that opposed the American strategy, as the situation in East Pakistan

(Bangladesh) was very dire, as a result of the military campaign launched by the regime of Yahya Khan against the people of East Pakistan. Thus, the nationalist sentiment had been very much leaning towards secession. These conditions made the United States realize that maintaining an ally with all these problems would be challenging. It would subject them to numerous difficulties and significant losses. Knowing that standing firmly against the separation, in a sharp and decisive manner, would place Bangladesh in the opposing strategic positions, after the secession, due to the mentioned reasons, became inevitable. Therefore, the United States, after being presented with these facts, did not strongly oppose the independence of Bangladesh.

However, the separation of Bangladesh and the Indo-Pakistan War resulted in multiple outcomes:

The secession of Bangladesh from Pakistan and the India's victory in the Indo-Pakistani war was as a Soviet triumph and an American setback. The secession and the loss of Pakistan in the war injured Pakistan deeply, a country that is allied with the United States. Yet, these outcomes were essentially superficial rather than profound because they were primarily the result of crucial internal factors, and the role of the Soviet Union was not necessarily the decisive factor.

And now, the role of the United States in the coup against Mujibur Rahman doesn't necessarily require direct and ordinary known forms of orchestrating coups. The process of influencing the coup must have originated from various sources, of which America played a significant role.

This coup achieved many things: it addressed a part of Pakistan's wounds because Mujibur Rahman led the

separation, serving as the prominent figure representing the people of Bangladesh. Additionally, it healed the moral wounds inflicted on the Americans due to them seeing Bangladesh's separation as a Soviet victory superficially. Naturally, the coup had practical consequences tied to America's policy in the region. The Soviets, undoubtedly, bear responsibility in this matter. Mujibur Rahman was a nationalistic leader, not aligned with either the Soviets or Americans; he aimed for an independent, non-aligned, Bangladesh. The Soviets, to a large extent, were satisfied with the superficial results they perceived as a victory, as they didn't offer appropriate support for Bangladesh to confront the American plan.

Thus, Bangladesh was left in the face of its persistent economic problems, and struggled, causing people to die of hunger in the streets. This added to the

weakness factors and the instability in the regime of Mujibur Rahman itself.

At that time, Iraq, which is still a developing nation, provided Bangladesh grants and loans totalling approximately \$100 million without any national connection between the two countries and without any particularly strong strategic factors, such as being in the same region. However, we certainly acknowledged the interdependence between the Indian Ocean and the gulf. We also seek to push back the influence that opposed our national and regional interests. These were our strategic considerations with Bangladesh. In addition to our evaluation of the regime, being non-aligned and nationalistic.

In this context, the Americans, having been expelled from Southeast Asia, sought to remedy the negative outcomes and wounds reflected by that loss on their

morale and the morale of their allies. They had to cure themselves with strikes in sensitive spots, including the Indian Ocean and the Gulf, as well as the Middle East and other regions in the world.

Anyway, the coup in Bangladesh and the current events in India today were not solely due to external factors; the internal factors were decisive. Moreover, the internal conditions, in our estimation, constitute another decisive factor for what may happen in the Indian subcontinent in the future.

The foundation of Mujibur Rahman's regime is, in principle, liberal. However, in recent times, strict measures were taken and a single-system has been adopted. In India, the nature of the system is also liberal. Indira Gandhi came to rule through parliamentary means. However, today, she is taking actions that contradict the liberal principles. What is

the lesson to be learned from the events of Bangladesh and India?

The lesson to be learned is the following: A fighter carrying a rifle of a certain type while also carrying ammunition of another type will inevitably be defeated. This holds true regardless of the individual quality of the rifle or ammunition, as “the rifle does not 'eat' apart from its gear” like the rural saying goes.

When the system’s intellectual and political foundation, along with all associated factors and resulting impacts, economically socially, and psychologically, is designed in a specific shape, this design necessitates a formula in dealing with the masses, a formula in dealing in handling dissent, a formula in international politics, and a formula in building the armed forces that aligns with the core principles of the design.

When the formula of non-alignment in Bangladesh, as well as the formula for building an independent nation, is vague and cloudy, and with little intellectual, political and social foundations in popular organization, the leader who engages in premature actions ends up in the manner Mujibur Rahman did because his “rifle and ammunition are not aligned”. And this condition was one of the main reasons of his downfall. Any regime that principally relies on the liberal formulas in dealing with the masses, dealing with the armed forces, international politics, building its economy, and dealing with mass organizations, falls if it suddenly and arbitrarily resorts to revolutionary methods used by revolutionary regimes to confront a difficult situation, crisis, or suffocation in economic, political, or social fields. Because in doing so, it loses its supporters without gaining others decisively and radically. In other words, every system adapts its methods to its philosophical principles and its reality. It may continue if it maintains its methods

derived from its nature for a longer period than if it adopts other formulas in the situations we pointed out.

In relation to India, and based on this principle, Indira Ghani is expected to face extraordinary problems. I mean, her fate is marked by a terrible storm because she borrowed a formula of the type that is used by revolutionary work without having the intellectual foundation for it, and without having the relation to mass organizations of revolutionary ideals and principals. Neither her relation nor the relation of her party to masses is like this. Her external relations are not of the same sort. Meaning, she doesn't have the basis which grant her the ability to utilize revolutionary formulas and advance them nationally and internationally. If dissents occur in India, it will be under the banner of "Defending Democracy" because Indira Gandhi has violated this principle, i.e., liberal democracy on which her regime is based, and on

which she came to rule with. As long as she violated it without offering an alternative foundation to rely on, then she has now become, and in the future, like the one who carries ammunition of a different sort than the rifle. This is our analysis of India's situation. However, we also must take India's other numerous problems in consideration.

Some people said that Indira Gandhi took new measures. However, they have failed to realize that depths begin at the shore. Indira Gandhi could have reached the depths starting from the shore. In other words, from the beginning, she should have founded a revolutionary party, established a revolutionary apparatus, adopted revolutionary formulas, and gradually used them. This way, the actions would have been natural and harmonious with the origin. Most of the formulas used by Indira Gandhi now were not crafted by the faith in the principles of revolutionary

work at the first place. Instead, they were made by immediate necessity. Thus, one should not anticipate her to yield outcomes comparable to those achieved by formulas rooted in a steadfast belief in revolutionary efforts. Such formulas are not detached from belief; they are either intimately or weakly intertwined with it. She might yield good results, but it is unexpected for these results to continue on the same path, creating a prosperous future for the people and the nation, qualitatively and drastically different from previous circumstances. Therefore, many leaders of national revolutions and many rulers in the Third World borrow- because of immediate necessity based on the conservation of their own rule or for some reasons that don't intertwine with deep and strategic revolutionary vision- formulas from revolutionary work to confront an urgent emergency, isolated from revolutionary thinking. Thereafter, we see them retreat from these formulas after the necessity for them no longer exists.

The revolutionary regime starts with the shore and reaches the depths. However, the regimes of the other kind, while appearing submerged at a certain stage, eventually recede to the shore. Their trajectory undergoes a reversal, aligning with the contradiction of resorting to revolutionary strategies to confront an imminent threat to the ruler's authority or connected to national complexes isolated from the initial conception, which is built on loving the masses, its faith in its own role in historic change, and based on impartial revolutionary principles in nation-building. Likewise, revolutionary regimes that borrow the formulas of liberalism to confront a suffocation, an economic-, political or societal crisis, they falter. By doing so, they have left their positions that enable them to confront through cohesion between a measure and its requirement and between its initials, its infrastructure, and superstructure. With such formulas,

they cannot ignite the enthusiasm of the masses to create an impenetrable barrier around them. If they do so, they provide significant opportunities for deviations, considering that dissent is especially an investment for liberal methods.

The experiments that we are talking about also raise our interest in the issue of flexibility in revolutionary work. Because, as liberal regimes can make mistakes when dealing with revolutionary methods to confront a certain case, revolutionary regimes may also make a mistake when dealing with flexibility to confront certain cases.

What is our view on this subject?

Flexibility in revolutionary work is required and necessary. This flexibility must correspond with the conditions of the desired revolutionary target. This initiates from the principal of revolutionary work, and not out of its isolation.

Flexibility, in a revolutionary sense, doesn't mean borrowing liberal methods. Because there is a difference between flexibility in the revolutionary sense and flexibility as a fixed approach as a part of the liberal approach, as a revolutionary movement utilizes flexibility in the right time, in the right amount, and in the direction that achieves decisive results on the path to the goal. Nevertheless, flexibility is sometimes used in a liberal mindset and not in a revolutionary one. The criterion of these two is the following: flexibility, in the revolutionary sense, is a temporary approach connected to a temporary condition. Meaning that it is connected with material conditions and facts. However, this approach must be abandoned when those temporary conditions and facts that necessitated its existence change, allowing the revolution or revolutionary movement to return to its original approach. On the other hand, flexibility, in the

liberal sense, always leads to revisionism because this concept doesn't consider the flexibility a temporary condition that leads towards progress, but turns it into a semi-permanent state.

When flexibility appears as a necessity of revolutionary work, it must be based on the essence, used according to the situations that we point out to. A revolutionary must not be delusional, as to replace the essence with the branch. Flexibility is not a goal, but a means to reach the goal. The case of personal sympathies and personal conceptions must not play a role in flexibility. Excuses or personal reasons are not permissible to maintain flexibility after its justifications end and the need to surpass them.

We fear the revolutionary's sympathies in flexibility because sympathies lead to relaxation. Often, the relaxation of a revolutionary is bigger than that of

another because of an old necessity. The popular example says that someone has an “old hunger”. This person would eat everything he comes across, and doesn’t according to his necessity but eats the amount that he thinks he missed previously. At that point, he becomes bloated, sluggish as well as a fat and easy prey. One of the ways to hunt is to prepare an opportunity for the prey to reach water. After the prey becomes extremely thirsty, upon disproportionately quenching itself, it falls prey to this method because it becomes unable to run quickly.

One of the dangers that revolutionary regimes face is its “fatness”, meaning the amount of added “fat” that disables its spontaneous movement. The added fat here is the ridding of the goals and methods of revolutionary work, as well as the detachment from the masses and the indulgence in life’s pleasures. This is what we always should pay attention to. We must

always watch the amount of “fat” that has been accumulated by revolutionaries and the revolutionary movement. In addition to the amount of it that must be removed.

From the known phenomenon of revolutionaries is the abandonment of revolutionary principles and revolutionary work to become merchants even more skilful than dishonest merchants, meaning the most miserable intermediaries. We have examples and witnesses in the Iraqi region, and in the Arab world. We can name quite few people that were revolutionary and became skilful in Brokerage and intermediation. Because these people don't wish to save their need for now, but because they wish to save what they missed through devious means. Thus, their behaviour takes a form of gluttony and degeneracy. A revolutionary is like a soldier while training in the army; he must not rest too much, because if he sits a while, he starts to

“become tiresome”. As the popular example goes
“Can’t go back to being able to stand up”.

The people might feel compassion for flexibility, as
can happen within the party, if there were no clear
justifications and conditions for it, and if the results of
this issue didn’t become apparent while it goes on.

Another danger that regimes, parties and revolutionary
movements in third world countries are exposed to is
that flexibility sometimes doesn’t get used according
to its need and in the right time. When objections arise
against the flexibility and its results, the perpetrators
start justifying sometimes, and get to expanding the
scale of its practice to a massive scale of the
revolutionary party’s bases and the masses. This leads
to weakness of principled immunity for said
revolutionary movement. The bases of the party and
its masses, when practicing flexibility and

manoeuvring with a justificatory and opportunistic framework, this leads to its isolation from its origin. One should be wary of such path. Political manoeuvrability is justified, meaning the use of flexibility in revolutionary work must not be practiced by the bases of the party, or even its mid- and lower authorities. It is the job of higher authorities alone, and said practice might be left to specific parties within the revolutionary party. However, as for the connection between flexibility and the principles goes, the principles must always be clear as to not be befallen with deviation. From our perspective in this region: as not to make the citizens sympathize with flexibility, especially in confronting the cases of national liberation, we have to strengthen the nationalistic sentiment. In addition to raising his revolutionary sentiment.

If we were only “Iraqis”, we would have kept using flexibility in dealing with surrounding cases in our region to a certain extent for a long period of time. However, Iraq, being a freed revolutionary base for the Arab nation and its revolutionary movement, and not a regional regime, makes it always necessary for us to use flexibility in the regional area to a calculated amount, and leave it in the right time.

For example, when we have normal or good relations with a certain Arab regime, which is different to our regime in terms of political, economic or societal foundations, this is a natural thing. But where does error and deviation start? It starts when we pressure or ask from a popular movement in that region for example to make peace, cooperate with it, or to cease from criticising and exposing the wrong and deviant policies. It is also wrong and deviant for us to keep

this relation with the regime going on the bases that it started, and without changing it.

The bases and the directions of flexibility must develop according to our own capabilities, the conditions of national struggle, the current reality of the battlefield, and the meant case of flexibility on the other side. Flexibility must develop in the direction, amount, foundation, in line with the facts that we pointed out to. It yields dangerous results if it doesn't develop, because it takes the form of silence, stillness and justification. These things are dangerous for the revolutionary system, as "leakage", at that point, comes from the opposite directions. Leakage will come from its external forces to the inside, carrying ideas contrary to the formulations of the revolutionary system and its fundamental principles, instead of the leakage occurring across its external forces and towards other systems, or parties meant to be dealt

with by flexibility, in other words, instead of it being a positive influence for the good of the revolutionary movement.

The party stands as the paramount foundation that must remain steadfast and unwavering, akin to a "steel ball" targeting the adversaries' goals at the right moment. The trust of the people towards the party, and the trust in political planning, principled revolutionary immunity makes it possible for them to utilize flexibility correctly. On the contrary, distrust motivates either to expand the use of flexibility, which leads to revisionism, Or it leads to it not being used when needed to, which then leads to isolation and missed legitimate opportunities for the revolutionary movement. So, we must regulate the balance by finding the correct relation in the trust between a regime, the people, and between using flexibility in

the required amount, time, and direction. Otherwise, to prove the revolutionary movement its revolutionary zeal, it must leave that flexibility before it yields its results. Or it doesn't use it according to the way of revolutionary work so it loses. It also might lead to revisionism on the terms of isolation and expanding the flexibility, so that it puts itself on the path of revisionism, which leads to downfall. The trust of the party in its leadership as well as the trust of the people in the party and leadership makes it possible for the utilization of flexibility in the right amount, in the right amount, for the right amount, and makes you able to leave it at the right time.

This is the flexibility in revolutionary work. It is one of the most delicate issues, that are connected to the principles of revolutionary work and its policies, and that face revolutionary movements internationally. In third world countries in particular, as it has an

important and decisive peculiarity on the way to the future of said revolutionary regimes. Because flexibility in third world countries isn't made by self-competency alone, neither it is only connected to direct historical conditions of said country, but it's connected to a bunch of factors including the psychological aspect of the people, in a certain time. Because when all the people decisively want flexibility, then this call must be answered to a certain extent so that the initiative stems from the revolutionary command. This isn't called revisionism or deviation behind illegitimate ideologies, instead, these are legitimate calculations for a psychological condition, that must be taken into consideration. If the leader or the revolution doesn't use flexibility in the right time, then the forces of revisionism will be the one using it. And it will be using it in the unwanted direction. Whether be it through its traditional forces, or through the right wing of the revolutionary movement itself. When the psychological condition,

the international political scene, and the situation in the region points out, in a certain time, that the manner of confrontation between a revolutionary regime, and between non-revolutionary regimes or circles became undesirable psychologically by the people, then it is the duty of the leadership to use an amount of flexibility with these regimes and circles, or with some of them to traverse them, and in extension to traverse a certain stage.

The victories in our region were great. They were not achieved dogmatically and they weren't achieved by the common path of national liberation and democratic movements in third world countries, but they were achieved through an extraordinary path in calculation, decision making, in confronting, and in administration.

A regime that is led by a revolutionary party like our party educes from experience non-dogmatic methods,

and if whenever the party failed to find the correct method to deal with a new case or a new condition, then it must not make the mistake of leaving the “extraordinary” path, with which it achieved victories, and adopt a dogmatic method instead. This leads to revisionism. And revisionism crushes all previous achievements, no matter how big and how deep. Because once the daily material results of the movement get separated from the spirit of the people and its ambitions, revisionism occurs. In other words, this condition must be fulfilled for revisionism to occur, that being the psychological separation between daily results derived from the regime and the relation between these results and the spirit of the people, its goals, and its enthusiasm to defend these results.

What is happening in India and what is happening in Bangladesh concerns us. But it doesn't intimidate us. Don't listen to when some say that what happened in

Bangladesh requires us to “worry”. These people must instead ask: “How did it happen?”. They must analyse the situation correctly. What happened in Bangladesh won’t happen here because we are carry “ammunition designed for our rifles”.

These people want to intimidate you. The reactionaries will try to intimidate you from one side, and some progressives will do so from another side. The reactionaries will say “this is your fate as friends of the Soviets”, “this is your fate for exaggerating patriotism” and “this is the fate of Socialists”.

Some progressives from another side will intimidate you and say “these people fell because they preserved sovereignty, and didn’t align themselves with the Soviets, however the Soviets wanted, and therefore they are finished” and so on. We, of course, won’t be

intimidated. Because we know our way and because we have faith in it.

This is our analysis and this is our path. This is the path that makes us avoid errors and setbacks. And it is the path that makes permanent victories. As long as we use the “ammunition for our rifle”, we won’t fear a danger, even if we were put in a jungle filled with monstrous predators. He who approaches us shall find that we have means to resist. However, for he who carries a rifle of a sort and ammunition of another, and enters the jungle, intimidation becomes natural. He will be hunted by jackals.

